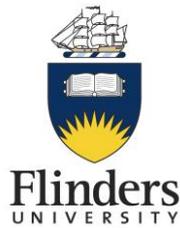


FLINDERS UNIVERSITY
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Flinders Human Behaviour & Health Research Unit

Releasing Children's Shining Potential

**Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of
primary school children through Journeywork**

Journey into Schools Report
August 2010

**Results: Key Informant Voice on the Impact of the
Journey Program on Child Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour**

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Chapter 7

Results: Child Voice on the Impact of the Journey Program on Children's daily lives

*I don't keep bad things inside me anymore; I don't hurt my sisters;
I don't fight anymore; I'm more patient and kind.*
(Individual reports from a number of children)

7.1 Learnings and impact questionnaire

On the last day of Journeywork, the children completed a 3-item questionnaire with the following cues:

1. My diamond shines when...
2. What I learnt from the journey sessions is...
3. What's different for me now is...

Of the 24 children who consented to participate in the Program, 18 children (74%) were present during the session and responded to questionnaire.

The themes arising from analysis of the learnings and impact questionnaire are discussed below and listed in Table 17, along with examples of the children's responses. The number (%) of responses in Table 17 reflects more than one response given by each child).

7.1.1 Protective factors that release children's shining potential

From the children's responses, a number of protective factors were identified that release children's shining potential and enhance resilience (refer Table 17). These are:

- Happiness
- Journeywork
- Being able to share concerns
- Sharing family time
- A non-violent environment
- Being treated with respect and dignity
- Being acknowledged and praised

Children reported that when they are happy, their diamond shines. Recall, the diamond in Journeywork is used as a metaphor for the shining potential that is inside each child/person; the child's recognition of their diamond shining is about how they feel when built-up emotions are released. Things that made them happy were: when they were having a good day, playing with friends, and having fun. Two of the children reported that Journeywork made them feel better and that the practitioners helped them release their worries. One child reported that when they are able to tell someone else their worries, they were able to release these worries.

A non-violent environment was identified as protective factor in emotional wellbeing, with one of the children writing that their diamond shines when “no-one fights with violence”. Fighting (with siblings, in the school yard, and between parents) was a recurring theme throughout the study, identified by the teachers and children. Fighting and violence were identified as risk factors to children’s emotional and social wellbeing.

Being treated with respect and dignity, acknowledged and praised were also identified as protective factors as children reported wanting to be treated the way they wanted others to treat them, and their potential shining through when people said good things about them.

7.1.2 Children’s learnings from Journeywork

Themes arising from the children’s reported learnings are reported in Table 17, and these were:

- The use of various Journey tools can help to manage emotions
- Self-acceptance and being nice to others
- Trust
- Emotions can affect the body

The children learnt that using the tools taught during Journeywork sessions enabled them to manage their emotions. Tools used during Journeywork sessions included for example:

- Mindfulness
- Imagery
- Music
- Dance
- Mentors
- Resource balloons
- Writing in an emotional diary
- Expressing gratitude.

The children reported learning to access their inner resilience through breathing in resources from real and imaginary balloons when they were upset, angry and fearful. They learnt that they could control their behaviour and calm themselves down. Furthermore, they learnt how to share their feelings when they are sad and lonely.

Self-acceptance and being nice to others was identified as a theme with children reporting that they learnt that they are very special and that they can be nice to others. Children also reported learning that they could “count on other people” (trust). In addition, there were learnings that emotions can affect the body. For example, one child reported their experience of emotions affecting the body as “when I get angry the black spots go all around my body”.

7.1.3 Impact of Journeywork on children’s daily lives

The children’s responses to the learnings and impact questionnaire indicated that attending the Journey Program had resulted in emotional and behavioural changes. One

child however, responded to the cue: *What's different for me now is...* "Nothing yet" (refer Table 17).

Emotional changes included the following:

- Happier
- Decreased anger
- Decreased worry
- Reduced fear
- Feeling safer
- More caring toward others
- Increased courage to forgive
- Nothing yet.

Emotionally the children reported being happier; experiencing less anger, worry and fear. One child reported that they had "conquered [their] fear of monsters and of being in the dark". Another child expressed that they now felt "safe all the time", and another, that they now had the "courage to forgive people".

Behavioural changes included the following:

- Letting go
- Less fighting
- Working with others
- Increased patience and kindness
- Using the resources taught.

One child reported that they didn't "keep bad things inside" them anymore (letting go); another child that they didn't hurt their sister anymore; and another that they didn't fight anymore. In addition, other children reported that they were working with others, and were more patient and kind; using the resources they were taught.

Table 1: Findings from the learnings and impact questionnaire

Themes	Example Statements	Number (%)
Protective factors		
Happiness	I feel happy; I have a good day; I play with my friends; I play and have fun.	14 (77.8)
Journeywork	I am at Journey and how they make me feel better; The Journey people get me over my worries.	2 (11.1)
Being able to share concerns	I tell someone my worries.	1 (5.6)
Sharing family time	I feel happy when I am with my family.	1 (5.6)
A non-violent environment	No one fights with violence.	1 (5.6)
Being treated with respect and dignity	I am treated the way I want others to treat me.	1 (5.6)
Being acknowledged and praised	People say good things about me.	1 (5.6)
Learnings from journeywork		
The use of various Journey tools can help to manage emotions	That I have to be calm when I'm angry; I can control my behaviour; To breath the balloons when I feel upset; When I'm in fear I breath in some balloons; I learnt that I can blow balloons to help me; How to calm myself down; That I don't need to get angry easily; When you're feeling sad or lonely you speak up; I enjoyed blowing the balloons up.	12 (66.7%)
Self-acceptance and being nice to others	I have a very special person in me; That I can be nice; To be nice.	3 (16.7%)
Trust	Count on other people.	1 (5.6)
Emotions can affect the body	That when I get angry the black spots go all around my body; That there are cells in our bodies.	2 (11.1)
Impact of Journeywork		
Emotional changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happier • Decreased anger • Decreased worry • Reduced fear • Feeling safer • More caring toward others • Increased courage to forgive 	I am more happy; I feel very happy; I'm not angry anymore; I don't get worried easily; I have conquered my fear of monsters and of being in the dark; I feel safe all the time; I care about other people; I have courage to forgive people.	10 (55.5%)
Behavioural changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting go • Less fighting • Working with others • Increased patience and kindness • Using the resources learnt 	I don't keep bad things inside me anymore; I don't hurt my sisters; I don't fight anymore; Working with others; I'm more patient and kind; That I can use balloons to help me.	6 (33.3%)
Nothing yet	Nothing yet	1 (5.6)

Thus, the findings from the questionnaire provide evidence from the children themselves on the protective factors that help to release their shining potential. Furthermore, the children learnt how to use the Journey tools to manage their emotions, resulting in both emotional and behavioural changes.

7.2 Chapter summary

Results from the child learnings and impact questionnaire indicate that protective factors that release children's shining potential are general happiness (n= 14; 77.8%), Journeywork, being able to share concerns, a non-violent environment, being treated with respect and dignity, and acknowledged and praised. Participant children reported learning how to use the various Journey tools (n=12; 66.7%), self-acceptance, trust and that emotion can affect the body. In addition, the children reported emotional changes (n=10; 55.5%) as a result of attending the Journey sessions; they were generally happier, with decreased anger, worry and fear. They felt safer, more caring toward others, with increased courage to forgive. Behavioural changes reported (n=6; 33.3%) included the ability to let go of grief, less fighting, increased patience, kindness and ability to work with others. Some of these learnings and changes were reported by only one or two children, therefore in order to confirm these results a larger study would need to be conducted.